



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO HIS HOLINESS TAWADROS II
POPE OF ALEXANDRIA AND PATRIARCH OF THE SEE OF SAINT MARK**

*To His Holiness Tawadros II
Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of Saint Mark*

As the second anniversary of our fraternal meeting in Rome is at hand, I wish to express to Your Holiness my prayerful best wishes for your well-being, as well as my appreciation for the spiritual bonds which unite the See of Peter and the See of Mark.

Today more than ever we are united by the ecumenism of blood, which further encourages us on the path towards peace and reconciliation. I assure you and the Christian community in Egypt and throughout the Middle East of my unceasing prayer, and I remember in particular the Coptic faithful recently martyred for their Christian faith. May the Lord welcome them into his Kingdom.

With thanksgiving to the Lord, I recall our advances along the path of friendship, united as we are by one baptism. Though our communion is yet imperfect, what we have in common is greater than what divides us. May we persevere on our journey to full communion, and grow in love and understanding.

It is particularly encouraging that the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches has recently finalized the document *The Exercise of Communion in the Life of the Early Church and its Implications for our Search for Communion Today*. I am certain that Your Holiness shares my hope that this vital dialogue will carry on and bear abundant fruit. I am especially grateful for the willingness of the Patriarchate of the See of Saint Mark to hold the next meeting of the Commission in Cairo.

Christians throughout the world are facing similar challenges, which require us to work together in confronting these issues. I appreciate your appointment last year of a delegate to participate in the

Extraordinary Synod of Bishops dedicated to the family. It is my hope that our cooperation in this area may continue, especially in addressing matters related to mixed marriages.

With these sentiments, and recalling what has rightly become known as the day of friendship between the Coptic Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church, I exchange with Your Holiness a fraternal embrace in Christ the Lord.

From the Vatican, 10 May 2015

Francis

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